

# LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

## Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **October 8, 2002**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **13**

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **Presentation by the Executive Director of the Region 2000 Regional Commission**

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached resolution supporting Region 2000 Priorities

SUMMARY: Bill Gillispie, Executive Director of the Region 2000 Regional Commission will make a short presentation to Council on two related matters. The first is a proposal to better coordinate regional economic development activities by bringing the Regional 2000 Partnership into the Regional Commission. Attached is a conceptual explanation of the proposal. If Council has no objection, discussions will continue on how to implement this idea.

The second matter involves the adoption of priorities for the Regional Commission as identified at the regional meeting in April. Adoption of the attached resolution would indicate Council's support for the priorities.

PRIOR ACTION(S): none

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

CONTACT(S): Bill Gillispie, Region 2000 PDC

ATTACHMENT(S): as noted

REVIEWED BY: lkp

RESOLUTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVES AND THEIR PRIORITIES BY THE CENTRAL VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

WHEREAS, the Region 2000 Regional Commission in an effort to plan for the future of the Central Virginia area held a joint meeting of the Region's local governments in April 2002 to discuss regional strategic initiatives and;

WHEREAS, following those discussions five initiatives were identified, economic development, local government revenue restructuring/enhancement, water & sewer resources, health insurance, and solid waste, that merited the Region's cooperative efforts, and;

WHEREAS, the development of these strategic initiatives gives clear direction as to the future focus of the Regional Commission and identifies the priorities of those initiatives, and;

WHEREAS, the regional cooperation demonstrated in the establishment and pursuit of these initiatives continues a long-standing tradition among the Central Virginia communities that is unequalled in the Commonwealth.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lynchburg City Council does hereby approve the strategic initiatives and their related priorities identified by the Region 2000 Regional Commission and hereby signifies that approval by its adoption of this resolution.

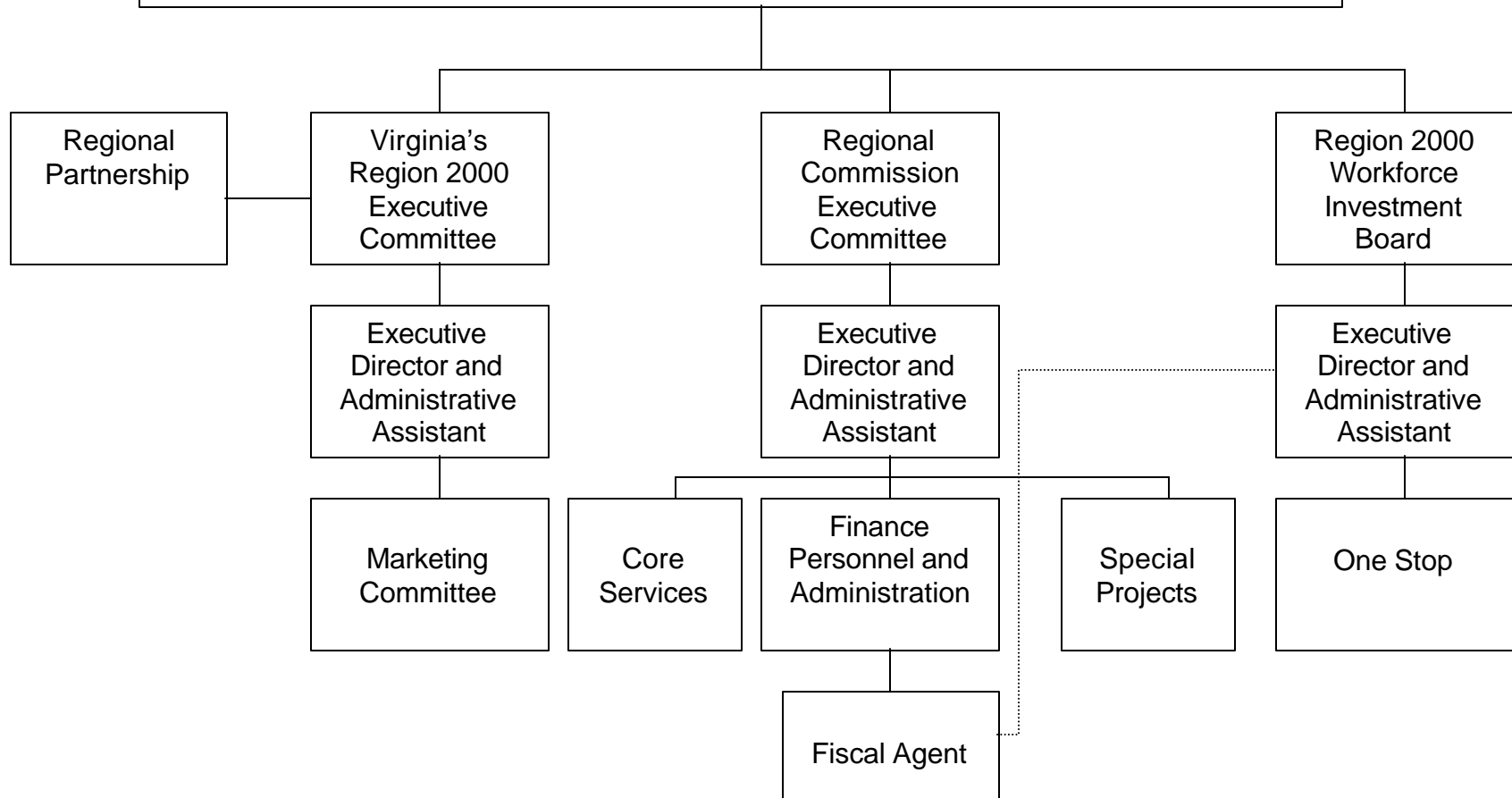
Adopted:

Certified:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council

197L

# REGION 2000 REGIONAL COMMISSION



# **REGION 2000 REGIONAL COMMISSION**

## **PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS – ESTABLISHED APRIL 2002**

### **PRIORITY 1**

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Regional Commission will serve as a conduit for the focus and enhancement of regional and local governmental activities that support Economic development through efforts such as site development and marketing assistance, regional infrastructure development/management, workforce development, transportation planning, and the development of efficient/effective solutions to reduce the cost and redundancy of services provided to the business community. The Regional Commission will also develop a strategy that will address the recommendations of the 2002 Workforce Audit and the Virginia's Region 2000 Strategic Plan as they relate to economic development.

### **PRIORITY 2**

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE RESTRUCTURING/ENHANCEMENT**

The Regional Commission will assume a leadership role at the state and local level in the development of viable options to address the continuing decline of available revenue to support local government services.

### **PRIORITY 3**

#### **WATER AND SEWER RESOURCES**

The Regional Commission will convene a Water Resources task force that will develop an automated map and data base of the existing water/sewer resources and examine the options available to the regions localities for development, both business and residential, in the future.

### **PRIORITY 4**

#### **REGIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

The Regional Commission will continue to facilitate the regional health insurance task force that is evaluating available options in controlling rising health care cost of the Commission's member localities.

## **PRIORITY 5**

### **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The Regional Commission will convene a Solid Waste Task Force and facilitate a discussion concerning the viability and feasibility of a regional approach to solid waste management which would include alternatives, evaluation of existing regional models, recycling, existing local debt verses equity. The future disposition of construction debris will also be addressed as a part of this discussion.

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN REGION 2000**

## **STRENGTHS, PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**July 25, 2002**

**Revised September 10, 2002**

### **STRENGTHS**

Region 2000 localities are poised to enter a new era of increased cooperation and coordination in their collective economic development efforts. The partnership that has been developed and nurtured over the years between local government and the private sector has been portrayed as a model across the Commonwealth as to how regional cooperation should be implemented. Region 2000 has known for many years that in order for this region to be successful this relationship is a critical component. The region continually seeks out avenues to enhance this relationship.

There are a number of assets in the region that cause it to stand out among those of the Commonwealth. Some examples are cost of living, strong sense of community, available business sites, and good public schools to name a few. However, as the nation's economy is seeing a decline in the traditional manufacturing base, it is also seeing a concurrent growth of information, technology and service-based industries. This trend is placing new demands on the skills of our labor force and causing the region as a whole to reevaluate as well as redefine its economic development vision for the future. This presents an opportunity to stop and take a candid look at how the region does business and what our priorities should be.

### **PRIORITIES**

In the latter part of 2001, Virginia's Region 2000 embarked on a joint venture with the Region 2000 Workforce Development Board to develop a regional workforce audit. This project focus was threefold: 1) Development of a workforce profile; 2) An evaluation of the workforce quality; and 3) A comparative analysis of the workforce/region with other similar size regions. In tandem with this project, Virginia's

Region 2000 initiated an update of its five-year strategic plan. Both of these projects were completed in the late spring/early summer of 2002. Both of these projects generated recommendations regarding immediate and long-term priorities the region should consider as it moved forward to address dwindling financial resources, the need for increased collaboration, and the continually declining/changing economy.

It is interesting to note that in a number of instances, the recommendations of these two independent reports seemed to overlap. Both of the reports gathered local data from four major sources: 1) the private sector; 2) the public sector; 3) the community at large; and 4) the educational community. A physical survey, as well as focus groups, were used to solicit input on issues such as: 1) general perceptions of Region 2000; 2) economic development priorities; and 3) regional capacity for innovation. The information generated by the efforts of these studies produced several common themes:

- An apparent lack of leadership from one guiding organization;
- Multiple agencies are competing for the same financial resources, both public and private;
- Multiple organizations are competing for the participation of private sector senior level management that only have a limited amount of time to dedicate;
- There is a need to provide a unified and compelling centralized vision as to how the region should develop;
- The region's economic development strategy must be closely aligned with the region's workforce development strategy; therefore, collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board is a critical component to the economic success of the region.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Given these priorities, there are several immediate opportunities that present themselves. In the fall of 1999 the Mayors and Chairpersons of Region 2000 localities came together to craft a vision of bringing cooperation and collaboration to a higher

level. Given careful consideration, these local elected officials reshaped the existing Central Virginia Planning District Commission into the new “Region 2000 Regional Commission.” The goal of this new organization was to provide economic competitiveness as a result of increased coordination between localities, reduced redundancy in governmental actions, improved efficiency, enhanced services, and speedier implementation of needed regional projects. More importantly the legal authority to make this change already existed in the Code of Virginia via the Regional Cooperation Act.

In 2000, the first opportunity to begin movement toward the implementation of this vision came with the creation and staffing of the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Although this organization functions under the auspices of the Regional Commission, it functions, for the most part, independently. It maintains a separate policy board and has an independent staff that reports to the WIB. The Regional Commission serves as their fiscal agent and jointly shares administrative, infrastructure, and operational support as needed. This makes the operation of the WIB and the Commission more cost effective.

## **PROPOSED MODEL**

Given this backdrop and the recommendations of the Virginia’s Region 2000 Strategic Plan (VR2000SP) and the Regional Workforce Audit Strategy (RWAS) there appears to be another window of opportunity to aggregate Virginia’s Region 2000 and the Partnership in with the Commission. This would bring three organizations together that have a significant role in the promotion of economic development in the region. The model that has effectively worked in the case of the WIB would appear to be applicable in the case of Virginia’s Region 2000 and the Partnership.

The larger and more positive impact of this move would be to continue to centralize and focus the region’s efforts in marketing, development of the workforce, and the strategic planning for economic development. This union would create the opportunity for the private sector and the local government to combine forces that could possibly begin to deal with companion issues that effect economic development.



Consideration should be given to expanding the Commission membership to include representatives of the WIB and the Partnership.

Examples of the benefits that would be realized with implementation of this model would be:

- Provision of a centralized focus to economic development for the Region.
- Brings both the private and public sector leadership of the Region together at a policy making level.
- Promotes cost efficiencies by utilizing the concept of shared services such as financial, administrative, physical infrastructure (telephone, data management, internet services), insurance, procurement, project development/implementation.
- Provides a single point of contact to the private sector for services relating to economic development, marketing, and work force training.
- Addresses the issue of leadership from one guiding organization and provides an overarching economic development champion, that being the Regional Commission, assuming representation of the partnership and the WIB on the Commission.
- Provides an opportunity to develop a unified and compelling centralized vision as to how the Region should develop economically and what efforts will be needed to accomplish that vision.
- Provides a single accountable organization that ensures support agencies are providing services that are meeting the needs of the Region's private sector in the areas of work force training, governmental assistance/support, marketing, and strategic planning for economic development.
- Brings the existing financial resources of 3 organizations, having various overlapping responsibilities, together thereby providing greater impact of those resources.
- Will provide a coordinated approach to support services, such as engineering, GIS, environmental, and financial needs in regional/individual economic development activities.

- Provides for a centralized organization that will command greater visibility and present a unified regional front to economic development issues at the state level.

Although there is a need for additional dialog with the various partners concerning the details of this proposal, it does have merit and warrants further pursuit. More importantly, it begins to address the concerns that were raised in the VR2000SP and the RWAS. It also begins to provide clarity to the business community as to where to inquire when in need of assistance with all areas of economic development in Region 2000.